Education and communication play an essential role in fostering sustainable behaviors. Effective communication skills are becoming more important as natural resource managers, development officers, educators, politicians, regulators, and business leaders consider what it takes to educate the public about sustainability, with the ultimate goal of behavior change.

While it is important to understand environmental issues and solutions, that is not the purpose of this course. We will explore education and communication strategies in our collective efforts to nudge society toward a sustainable future. This course is geared toward those who will be working with various stakeholders and the general public in a variety of formal and nonformal settings, developing programs with goals relating to sustainability.

Roslynn Brain-McCann
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Why communicating sustainability?

This course offers a "capstone" experience for the Sustainable Systems minor and for Environmental Studies majors with a strong interest in sustainability. It is also available to all students passionate and knowledgeable about sustainability and service learning.

While there are no absolute prerequisites, the course is designed for students nearing the end of their undergraduate careers. If you are a Sustainable Systems minor, it is best if you have already completed, or are concurrently completing, all four of your systems options as well as LAEP 2039.

Contact instructor anytime via email or phone.
Classes: Tuesdays & Thursdays 3:00-4:15 LIB 421 or IVC.
Tuesdays=content & presentations;
Thursdays=group work, videos & reading.
**Required Readings**


Additional readings are posted online.

**Course Goal**

Link theories of human behavior and change to education and communication strategies designed to achieve sustainability.

**Course Objectives**

1. Identify definitions, common misconceptions, and key principles of sustainability.

2. Think critically about sustainable living, including why people do and do not engage in sustainable behaviors.

3. Explain models or theoretical frameworks that can be used for analyzing the questions: “Why do people act the way they do?” “What are the barriers to environmental behavior?” “How can we motivate people to act environmentally?”

4. Use theoretical frameworks and marketing techniques to design comprehensive communication strategies to change behavior.

5. Identify and apply effective facilitation, conflict management, messaging, and negotiation strategies.

6. Consult with a community partner to develop and implement a comprehensive sustainability plan.

**Grading System:**

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Service Learning Project:

Service learning allows students to foster real-world change via application of course content. In this course, you will work in a group to 1) identify a local community partner, 2) determine key stakeholders involved, 3) design an effective educational communication campaign, and 4) craft a strategic plan for future sustainability efforts in collaboration with your community partner. All projects must be approved by Ros. Plenty more about the service-learning component of the course will be discussed in class.

Grade:

In-Class Discussion & Weekly Group Meeting (Thursdays): Class provides important peer bonding, learning, reflection & group time requiring both preparedness & participation. (10%, 14 weeks, 0.75%/7.5 points per week)

Online Discussions/Quizzes: Each week, you will respond to readings/videos through either an online discussion (also providing responses to at least two of your peers), or a timed quiz. (20%, 15 discussions/quizzes, 1.33%/15 points per discussion/quiz)

Community Partner Introduction Presentation: A video-recorded 3-5 minute presentation uploaded on canvas. (September 22, 5%/50 points)

Community Partner Meetings: At least 3 throughout the semester. Weeks of October 1, October 15 & November 5. (15%, 50 points per meeting)

Service Learning Report Part 1: SWOT, sustainability aspects the group will focus on, barrier/benefit, & evaluation ideas (October 23, 15%/150 points)

Newspaper Article: Write and submit what your group is doing for your service project using effective communication techniques. (November 3, 5%/50 points)

Presentation to Community Partner: This is your final semester presentation, which you will record. (December 11, 15%/150 points)

Complete Service Learning Report: Including revised Part 1, as well as specific accomplishments, evaluation/impact assessment, and recommendations for next steps. (December 11, 15%/150 points).

Optional Bonus: Create a quality 1-3 minute promotional video about your project using components of Community-Based Social Marketing. (December 7, 3%/30 points)

Regular attendance, attentiveness (no texting, reading the newspaper, completing crossword puzzles, etc.), asking questions, completing assignments on time, and respecting others (including guest lecturers) is expected.

Missed Assignments: If you miss any in-class activities, you will receive a zero. If you miss an at-home assignment, your grade will go down one letter for each 24-hour period it is late, beginning the minute after it is due.

Recorders & Cell Phones: You can use digital recorders if you wish. Turn off cell phones prior to class or you may be asked to leave.

Academic Integrity: If I discover that someone has plagiarized all or part of an assignment, that person will receive zero points and they will be reported for an academic integrity violation. Additional sanctions may occur. The second infraction will result in a failing grade (F) for the course. To learn more about USU’s Honor System, see http://catalog.usu.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=3140.

Accommodations for Disabilities: Students with ADA-documented physical, sensory, emotional or medical impairments may be eligible for reasonable accommodations. Veterans may also be eligible for services. All accommodations are coordinated through the Disability Resource Center (DRC) in Room 101 of the University Inn, (435) 797-2444 voice, (435) 797-0740 TTY, (435) 797-2444 VP, or toll free at 1-800-259-2966. Please contact the DRC as early in the semester as possible. Alternate format materials (Braille, large print or digital) are available with advance notice.

Please let Ros know the first week of class if you have any special needs. You can find more information about the DRC at http://www.usu.edu/drc/
Communicating Sustainability

Roslynn Brain-McCann is an Associate Professor in Sustainable Communities. She uses conservation theory, communication techniques, and social marketing tools to foster a broad spectrum of environmental behaviors at the community, state, and national levels. She developed and manages a statewide Extension Sustainability initiative that provides tools and information for the general public to engage in sustainable behaviors (extensionsustainability.usu.edu). She also runs sustainability camps for youth as well as various adult sustainability workshops. Roslynn lives with her husband and child in a straw bale, earthen plaster, solar PV, passive solar, greywater, permaculture landscaped home in a walking-biking only community in Moab.

Roslynn has a 75% extension appointment, so much of her time is spent traveling throughout the state and nation helping the general public and Extension educators in sustainability. She is based out of USU Moab.

About the Instructor:

In the past, Roslynn has worked with the Canadian government on buy local initiatives and farmer direct programming, farmers’ co-operatives on best management practices, Cooperative Extension with sustainability and evaluation, national parks in interpretation, and whole food stores in product sourcing.

Her expertise lies in fostering environmental behavior change, measuring and predicting environmental behaviors, survey design, program implementation and evaluation, recycling, permaculture, and buy-local initiatives.

Lastly, she strongly feels each of you can become effective sustainability communication change agents and is willing to help you both inside and outside of the classroom to succeed in making a difference.